

Warden Message

June 11, 2009

On Tuesday, June 2, 2009, a citizen of the United Kingdom suffered a gunshot wound at a popular Bishkek restaurant. While he is expected to make a full recovery and the local police are investigating the case, the U.S. Embassy would like to remind U.S. citizens of the increasingly high rate of crime against foreigners and urge them to exercise caution especially when near or frequenting places popular with expatriates.

The U.S. Embassy would like to remind citizens of the follow section of our Country Specific Information Sheet:

The U.S. Embassy advises U.S. citizens to exercise caution in urban areas of the Kyrgyz Republic due to the high rate of violent crime against foreigners, including U.S. Embassy personnel... Travelers should not take public transportation or walk after dark and should be extremely cautious in or near hotels, bars, parks, and all places that attract an expatriate clientele. The Kyrgyz Republic has a high rate of violent crime due to unemployment and a large number of organized gangs. Muggings occur at any time and can be quite violent, leaving the victim severely injured ... Other common crimes include auto theft and pick pocketing in crowded places such as markets, Internet cafes, and on public transportation. Due to security reasons, U.S. Embassy personnel are prohibited from frequenting the following venues in Bishkek: Club Heaven at the Dostyk Hotel, Fire and Ice Night Club, and Butterfly Nightclub. U.S. citizens have been the victims of such crimes as rape, assault, kidnapping, and robbery in urban and rural parts of the Kyrgyz Republic, and there have been reports of U.S. citizens who were robbed by groups of young men who had followed them back to their residences from hotels and bars. Police officers rarely speak English and there are no victims' assistance programs available. Medical and psychiatric care for victims is limited.

Harassment and extortion by people who purport to be Kyrgyz police officers are common. According to Kyrgyz law, any person claiming to be a police officer must show identifying documents on demand. U.S. citizens should not act upon requests by people, whether in civilian dress or in police uniform, if they have no official identification. U.S. citizens also should not get into cars with anyone they do not know, even if the person claims to be a police officer.

U.S. citizens are urged to register and update their contact information through the State Department's travel registration website, <https://travelregistration.state.gov/ibrs/>. The U.S. Embassy in Bishkek is located at 171 Prospect Mira, 720016 Bishkek, Kyrgyz

Republic. The phone number is 996-312-551-241 and may be used after hours. Fax: 996-312-551-264, and website: <http://bishkek.usembassy.gov>.

Updated information on travel and security in the Kyrgyz Republic may be obtained from the Department of State by calling 1-888-407-4747 within the United States and Canada or, from outside the United States and Canada, 1-202-501-4444. U.S. citizens should consult the Department of State's Country Specific Information for the Kyrgyz Republic at http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_945.html, the Worldwide Caution http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/pa/pa_1161.html and the travel publication "A Safe Trip Abroad" at http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/safety/safety_1747.html.